

Gulf of Mexico – A National Resource

The Gulf of Mexico is an integral part of our nation's economic and ecological vitality. The Gulf region helps fuel and feed the nation. The Gulf of Mexico provides almost half of the nation's energy supply and the largest domestic market for shrimp, oysters and many species of fishes.

- The Gulf of Mexico region is a vital economic engine for the country - supplying three trillion dollars annually to the U.S. economy.
- The Gulf of Mexico is critical to the nation's energy supply, contributing over 44% of the crude oil, 43% of the dry natural gas, and over 50% of liquid natural gas that fuels this nation.
- The Gulf Coast yields 69% of the shrimp and 70% of the oysters caught in the U.S.
- The Mississippi basin is a major flyway for migratory birds. It is used by up to 40% of North America's duck, geese, swan and eagle populations. Much of the continent's waterfowl population winters along the Gulf Coast.
- The transportation of goods via the Mississippi River represents a crucial link between our nation's Midwestern breadbasket and world markets. More than half the grain exported from the United States is transported down the Mississippi River and through Gulf of Mexico waters to markets around the world.
- Seven of the nation's top 10 ports in terms of tonnage or cargo value are located in the Gulf of Mexico with two of these in the top global seven.
- Drainage into the Gulf of Mexico comes from one of the world's largest river basins and includes an extensive network of national watersheds from 33 states, 20 major river systems and over 150 individual rivers.
- Much of the atmospheric moisture supplied to the North American heartland during spring and summer has its origin over the Gulf of Mexico. A weakened jet stream contributed to the Great American Dust Bowl by depriving the region of much needed rain.

The Gulf of Mexico provides a critical transportation link to move our trading products worldwide. The Gulf region also provides essential habitat for migrating waterfowl and many other species such as alligators, dolphins and whales.

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance
Environmental Education Network
www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org
February 2007**

References

Bullet 1

Gulf Coast Ocean Observing System. Generic Power Point: *Generic_IOOS-GCOOS.ppt*. 2006.
<http://ocean.tamu.edu/GCOOS/Office/board.htm>. Accessed December 4, 2006.

Bullet 2

Department of Energy. U.S. Crude Oil, Natural Gas, and Natural Gas Liquids Reserves 2005 Annual Report. Energy Information Administration DOE/EIA-0216(2005). November 2006.
http://www.eia.doe.gov/pub/oil_gas/natural_gas/data_publications/crude_oil_natural_gas_reserves/current/pdf/arr.pdf. Accessed 12/19/2006.

Bullet 3

Gulf of Mexico Program. *General Facts About the Gulf of Mexico*. 2006.
<http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/about/facts.html> Accessed 12/11/06.

Bullet 4

Mississippi River Museum. *Mississippi River Fact Sheet*. 2006.
http://www.mississippirivermuseum.com/press_detail.cfm?ID=3. Accessed 12/06/06.

Bullet 5

Mississippi River Museum. *The Invisible industry: A Towboat Journey Down the Upper Mississippi*. 2002. <http://www.mississippirivermuseum.com/invis.industry.pdf>. Accessed 12/06/06.

Bullet 6

U.S. EPA. Gulf of Mexico Program. *General Facts About the Gulf of Mexico*.
<http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/about/facts.html>. Accessed 12/06/06.

Bullet 7

Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies. *Fast Facts*.
<http://www.hri.tamucc.edu/facts.html>. Accessed 12/06/06.

Bullet 8

About.com. Q. *What Caused the Dust Bowl in the US Midwest in the 1930's?*
<http://weather.about.com/od/weatherfaqs/f/dustbowl.htm>. Accessed 12/7/2006.